

OVERVIEW

Central Valley Flood Protection Board's Designated Floodway Program

Background and History

The Designated Floodway Program is a flood protection tool used by the Board to exert control over floodways and natural watercourses.

The Board defines a designated floodway as a waterway of defined limits consisting of stream channel and the portion of the adjoining floodplain that is required to reasonably provide for the passage of the design flood. The primary function of the Designated Floodway Program is to restrict development in the area required for passage of a 100-year flood flow or designated flood flow on streams in the Central Valley. It reduces the impacts of flooding by preserving the reasonable flood-passage capacities of natural watercourses and floodways. To provide this control, the Board develops plans, adopts floodway boundaries, investigates possible modifications of boundaries, and approves as acceptable the uses and structures within floodways that conform to the Board's requirements. Once formally adopted by the Board, a designated floodway becomes an official standard of management to preserve the flood-carrying capacity of a particular stretch of a stream.

The Designated Floodway Program began in 1968. The first designated floodway adopted by the Board was a 7.5 mile stretch of the San Joaquin River from Merced River to Salt Slough. From 1968 through 1988, the Board adopted 62 designated floodways for a total stream length of more 1,300 miles. The last designated floodway adopted by the Board was the 47-mile stretch of the Sacramento River from Vina to Hamilton City. Please see attached Figure 1 and Table 1.

Section 8609 of the Water Code, enacted in 1986, formally recognized the Board's authority to designate floodways in the Central Valley. Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations provides further details of the Board's regulatory authority. In particular, Article 5, Section 107 of Title 23, lists what particular activities and structures are allowed within the boundaries of the designated floodways. Article 8 provides the standards required for permissible activities and structures.

The development of the designated floodways included the following major steps:

1. Studies were conducted to determine the floodway requires to safely pass the design flood, generally 100-year flood flows;
2. Preliminary floodway boundaries (encroachment lines) were delineated on aerial photographic maps;
3. Public hearings were conducted to review and hear public views and adopt the proposed designated floodway;
4. The adopted designated floodway map is recorded with the appropriate county recorder;
5. Inspections for encroachments; and
6. Institution of permit application procedure for proposed encroachments.

The Designated Floodway Program brings to the attention of the public, and especially to the riparian landowners, the Board's encroachment control program and its application and permit procedures. The publicity and public meetings involved in delineating and adopting a designated floodway help to make people aware of existing flood threats.

Relatively accurate large-scale aerial photo maps of the designated floodway and usually of the adjacent flood plain (see attached designated floodway map sample), are filed with the county recorder, and copies are made available to other local government agencies concerned with flood management. By referring to these maps, a landowner can usually locate the designated floodway boundaries and find out if the proposed use falls within the floodway.

Current Status

Funding of the Designated Floodway Program was gradually eliminated through a series of budget cuts in the 1990s. Today, the only activity being conducted by the Board is issuing permits for encroachments in the designated floodways. The Board also responds to reports of illegal encroachments. Regular aerial or field inspections have not been conducted for years.

Proposed Future Actions

The Designated Floodway Program is a nonstructural approach of keeping development from encroaching in waterways. This program no doubt has contributed to flood control in the Central Valley and deserves more attention. At a minimum, funding should be allocated in future fiscal years to resume annual aerial inspection of the designated floodways and allocate time for existing staff to conduct spot inspections. The Board should also consider updating the designated floodway boundaries to incorporate the best available hydraulic, hydrologic, and topographic information currently available. The designated floodways were developed between 1968 and 1988 and new information and hydraulic modeling tools have since been developed.

TABLE 1. CVFPB DESIGNATED FLOODWAY

Stream	County	Reach	Avg. Frequency	Date Adopted
American River	Sacramento	Mayhew Road to Nimbus Dam	100-year	2/8/74
Ash Slough	Madera	Chowchilla to Chowchilla River	100-year	3/24/72
Berenda Slough	Madera	Avenue 21-1/2 to Ash Slough	100-year	3/24/72
Cache Creek	Yolo	I-5 to Camp Haswell (near Rumsey)	100-year	(Internal)
Chowchilla River	Madera, Merced, & Mariposa	Eastside Bypass to Buchanan Dam Site	100-year	3/24/72
Clear Creek	Shasta	Sacramento River to Whiskeytown Dam	100-year	2/27/76
Colusa Drain	Glenn, Colusa, & Yolo	Knights Landing to Willows	50-year	4/23/71
Consumnes River	Sacramento	Hwy 99 to El Dorado County Line	100-year	2/28/75
Consumnes River	Sacramento	Mokelumne R. to Hwy 99	100-year	3/22/74
Cottonwood Creek	Shasta & Tehama	Confluence Sacramento River to Dutch Gulch Dam (proposed) + 7 miles South Fork	100-year	9/26/75
Cottonwood Creek	Tulare	Cross Creek to Grapevine Creek	100-year	6/25/86
Cow Creek	Shasta	As Shown on Chart B	100-year	1/24/75
Cross Creek	Kings & Tulare	Kansas Avenue, Kings Co. to St. Johns River, Tulare Co	100-year	9/16/82
Cross Creek	Kings	Nevada Avenue to Kansas Avenue	100-year	1/24/85
Dry Creek	Sacramento & Placer	Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to City of Roseville Sewage Treatment Plant	100-year	4/12/74
Dry Creek	Placer	Inside City Limits of Roseville to City of Roseville Sewage Treatment Plant	100-year	12/10/76
Dry Creek	Stanislaus	Tuolumne River to AT&SFRR	100-year	11/5/71
Feather River	Butte	Honcut Creek to Oroville Fish Hatchery Dam	100-year	10/8/71

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Stream	County	Reach	Avg. Frequency Standard Project Flood	Date Adopted Not Adopted or Recorded. For Cobey-Alquist Compliance Only.
North Fork Feather River	Plumas	Lake Almanor to Diversion Dam		
Fresno River	Madera	AT&FSRR to Road 22-1/2	100-year	5/8/70
Fresno River	Madera	AT&FSRR to Hidden Dam Site	100-year	4/2/71
Keweenaw River	Tulare	Middle Fork: Kaweah Lake to Ash Mountain	100-year	10/18/74
		North Fork: from Middle Fork to 2.5 miles upstream from Middle Fork	100-year	
		South Fork: from Middle Fork to 1.75 miles upstream from Middle Fork	100-year and less than 100-year	
Kern River	Kern	Tupman to Golden State Highway	100-year	4/19/76
Kern River	Kern & Kings	Tupman to Tulare Lake	100-year	11/12/76
Kern River	Kern	Golden State Highway to Isabella Dam	100-year	6/20/78
Kern River	Kern	North and South Fork to Isabella Dam	100-year	11/19/81
Kings River	Fresno	Reedley to Piedra Dutch John Cut Cole Slough, Excelsior Road to Layton McMullen Grade Crossing to Parkhurst-Excelsior Ave.	90-year at Pine Flat Dam	6/25/71
Kings River	Tulare	Hwy 99 to Reedley	90-year at Pine Flat Dam	6/25/71
Kings River	Kings	Kings River and distributaries within Kings County	90-year at Pine Flat Dam	6/25/71
Kings River	Fresno	Mendota Pool to McMullen Grade Crossing	100-year	2/22/74
Kings River	Fresno	Piedra to Pine Flat Dam	100-year	2/22/74
Kings River	Fresno	Cameron to Byrd Sloughs	100-year	2/22/74

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Stream	County	Reach	Avg. Frequency	Date Adopted
Merced River	Merced	San Joaquin River to Merced Falls	50-year	12/17/71
Mokelumne River	San Joaquin & Sacramento	Consumnes River to Highway 99	100-year	1/24/75
Mokelumne River	San Joaquin	Camanche Dam to Highway 99	100-year	1/10/77
Porter Slough	Tulare	Road 192 to Tule River	11/7/75	
Sacramento River	Butte, Glenn & Tehama	VARIOUS	VARIOUS	VARIOUS
			10 to 100-year	3/12/1971
				11/10/1988
Sacramento River	Glenn	Ord Ferry Road to Glenn/Tehama County Line	20-year	3/12/71
Sacramento River	Butte	South Parrott Grant Line to Butte-Tehama County Line	20-year	3/12/71
Sacramento River	Tehama	Tehama	VARIOUS	VARIOUS
		140,000 cfs at Red Bluff	10-year	3/12/71
		180,000 cfs at Vina	40-50-year	3/13/71
		230,000 cfs at Ord Ferry	20-year	5/28/71
Sacramento River	Shasta	Keswick Dam to Cottonwood Creek	100-year at Keswick Dam	3/10/72
San Joaquin River	San Joaquin, Stanislaus, & Merced	Airport Way to Merced River	With New Melones 60-year, 65-year, and 80-year	3/8/74
San Joaquin River	Merced	Merced River to Salt Slough	25-year	6/21/68
San Joaquin River	Madera & Fresno	Gravelly Ford Area to Friant Dam	100-year (snowmelt flood)	6/11/77
St. Johns River	Tulare	Cross Creek to McKays Point	100-year	6/25/86
Stanislaus	San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras & Tuolumne	Project levees to Goodwin Dam	100-year	6/19/81
Stony Creek	Glenn	Sacramento River to Black Butte Dam	150-year	8/15/78

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Stream	County	Reach	Avg. Frequency	Date Adopted
Tule River	Tulare	Road 224 to Success Dam	100-year	10/18/74
Tule River	Tulare	Springville Area	100-year	3/7/74
Tule River	Tulare	Road 192 Road 224	100-year	11/7/75
Tuolumne River	Stanislaus	Mitchell Road to Whitmore Road (Extension of Whitmore Ave)	100-year	4/11/75
Tuolumne River	Stanislaus	San Joaquin River to Extension of Whitmore Avenue	100-year	11/21/75
Tuolumne River	Stanislaus	Mitchell Road to La Grange Dam	100-year	11/21/75
Yuba River	Sutter	Hwy 70 to Daguerre Point Dam	Standard Project Flood	7/28/1972 (Internal)

Sample Designated Floodway Map

